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15 July 1954

BACKGROUND

GENEVA CONFERENCE

- I. Communists expected offer Mendes-France Indochina settlement by his 20 July deadline.
~~A. Proposals almost certain to~~
~~meet US UK general conditions~~
- II. Communist package expected include cease-fire, partition both Vietnam and Laos, *and* outline for political settlement.
 - A. Ambiguities should make proposals easier for French to accept.
- III. Communists expected make maximum claim on Vietnam, a lesser ^{ON} Laos, least on Cambodia.
 - A. Partition Vietnam (between 14th-18th parallel), general elections to follow.

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- B. Control some part Laos, with remainder neutralized; agreement on steps toward coalition government.
 - C. Neutralization Cambodia; some form recognition for "resistance movement."
 - D. Such "neutralization" means ban on foreign military bases, sharp restriction defensive capabilities.
- IV. Several territorial divisions Vietnam, Laos possible.
- A. Current Communist aim is division Vietnam at 14th parallel, large slice eastern Laos.
 - B. French propose division Vietnam near 18th parallel (Dong Hoi line):
apparently
^ willing accept Communist control small part Laos.

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- C. Communists might accept Dong Hoi line, if also given control of portion southern Vietnam plus strip of Laos.
- D. Might also settle for partition both Vietnam and Laos along Dong Hoi-Thakhek line (reported French defense line both states) which mean control northern half Indochina.
- V. France, Associated States, have different attitudes toward proposals.
 - A. Unless Mendes-France recently, *stiffened*, will like as not accept proposals.
 - B. Vietnamese (opposed any deal with Viet Minh) fear French sellout: may try by-pass French, get best possible terms for themselves.

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- C. Laotians reportedly split on
question ^(Wm/Mu N) recognize, negotiate with
Communist-sponsored "Pathet Lao."
- D. Cambodians, at last report, holding
firm against Viet Minh demands;
hoping for direct US support.